

# History of the Christian Service Department

See Fact Book for other detail. Other materials are in the FW Alumni Center server.

While there were Christian Service directors prior to Miss Joy Gerig, she developed the department into a significant part of the student's educational experience. Here are some significant things accomplished through her tenure:

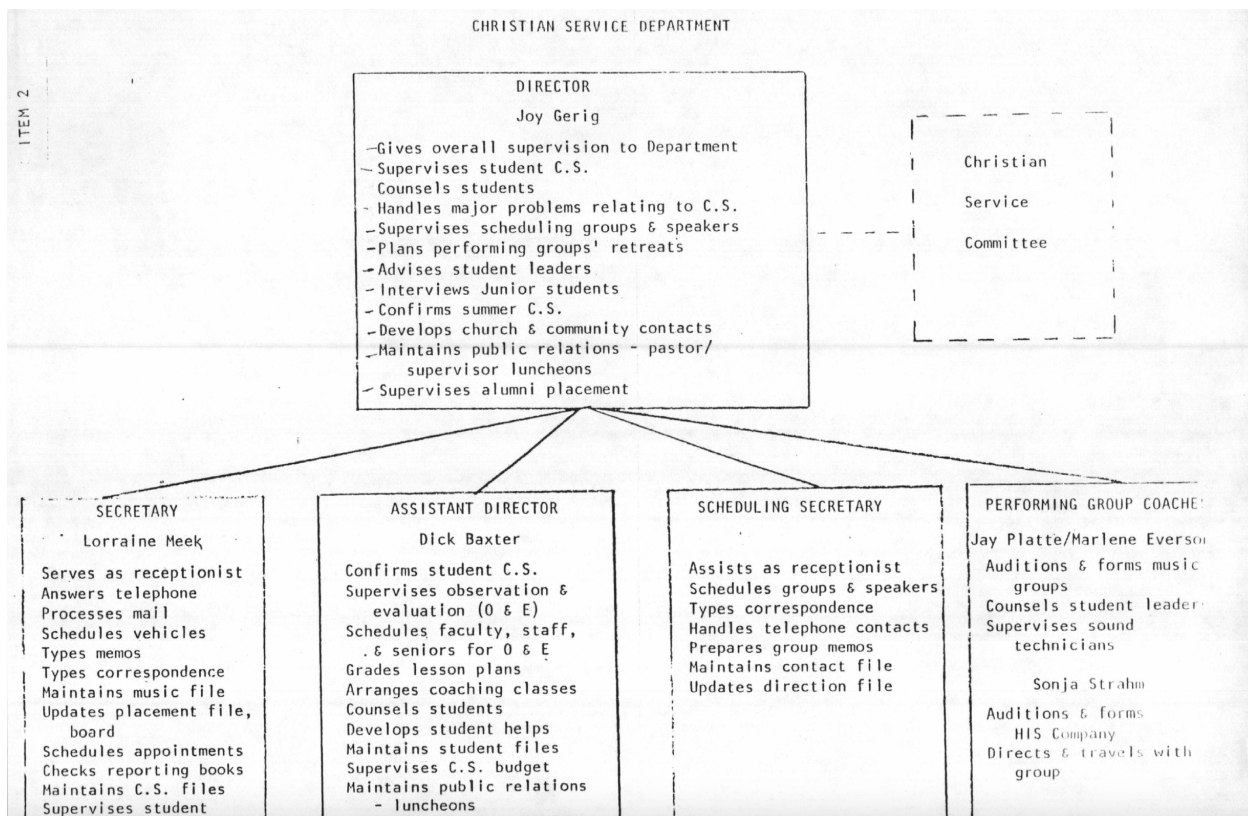
- ☐ placement of students with an experience related to their majors.
- ☐ weekly accountability by form.
- ☐ mid and end-of-semester evaluations.
- ☐ the development of a **Christian Service Manual** which informed students and faculty of the process of evaluation and how the Christian Service department operated. The manual can be viewed at <https://fwarchiveddocuments.s3.amazonaws.com/Christian+Service+Dept./Christian+Service+Manual+digitized.pdf>
- ☐ contact was kept with churches and community organizations through placement of students and Christian Service musical groups, called by some, gospel teams.
- ☐ The scheduling and training of performing musical and drama groups. In early days in Fort Wayne there were music teams, but no records were kept. 79 groups from 1927 through 1942 were going out but unnamed. Starting in Fall, 1942 groups were named and numbered 150 through 1960. During Joy Gerig's tenure 135 groups were scheduled and expanded to include drama. Notable among them the Crusaders quartet (one early 50s; one late 50s), the Ambassadors quartet 1965-68 (who did a coast-to-coast tour and also featured a trumpet trio), the Singing Collegians (who traveled to Jamaica as a part of the Youth for Christ International Congress on Evangelism, the making of a record, and a coast-to-coast summer tour, HIS company a drama troupe who also traveled several summers.
- ☐ the development of a **Christian Service Performing Groups Directory** which listed by year all the musical and drama groups scheduled through the Christian Service department.

Joy Gerig, with the assistance of Richard Baxter, developed the department to effective preparation of students. She was the longest serving director, 1959-90 or a total of thirty-one years. Linda Moser was also an assistant during the '60s.

There were many secretaries and secretarial assistants that were a vital part of the department during the Joy Gerig era. Marilyn Dissinger Steiner, Marilyn Grubb, Sue Strunk, Judy Seawell Ziekle, Carol Lubbers Neuschwander, Lorraine Meek Roth, Jill Swanson Burton.

Others who assisted were Janice Burke, Sherry Ferber, Elizabeth (Liz) Ellis Morehead, Pat Macy, Pat Syndram, John Charles, Susan Landt Janice Burke, Phyllis Hermann, Sherry Ferber, Bev Free and many more.

Here is an overview of the Christian Service Department in the 1980s, outlined by Joy Gerig:



Portions of the following are taken from *Winter 1983-84 Pulse Lifelines*

Ever since the beginning of the Bible institute/Bible college movement, educational programs have combined formal and practical training in preparing students for Christian ministries.

This emphasis upon practical Christian service has been one of important characteristics of the Bible college movement. Christian service has been referred to by Randy Bell, Executive Director of the American Association of Bible Colleges, as "one of the four pillars of Bible college, the others being sound doctrine, purposes that are related to church vocational ministries, and the requirement that all students major in Bible."

Fort Wayne Bible College's rationale for the Christian service experience has the same focus as those early pioneers of the Bible college movement: to provide opportunity for learning by doing, and in that process, develop a student's skills and abilities for excellence in ministry. At Fort Wayne Bible College the Christian Service Department is regarded as an extension of the various academic departments providing the students with experiences designed to aid them in developing skills and abilities—thus further preparing the students for future ministry.

### C.S. Experiences Vary

"I was able to put in practice what I learned in Intro to Christian Education class." "Principles and Methods of Teaching helped me realize that I can speak in front of people. The more I teach, the more confidence I have in the abilities that I can use to get the Gospel across to children."

...These are comments of just two of our over 200 students who were involved weekly in 83 churches representing 27 different denominations in teaching, preaching and visiting as well as directing choirs, ensembles, and club programs.'

In addition to church ministries, a number of our students serve weekly with 19 para-church organizations. Five students travel each week to Blacklake Lodge, a halfway house on a 150 acre farm near Columbia City, Indiana, to tutor young men under eighteen years of age who have been placed there by the courts. In addition to helping the boys improve their reading, language and math skills, the students interact by participating in rap sessions or recreational activities and end the evening together with relating their faith in Christ through a brief devotional.

Twenty-three students assist the Urban Youth Ventures program as volunteers and are involved weekly in conducting after school sessions with 9-12 year old inner-city children. Two the students serve as student supervisors of the various school programs under the leadership of the Urban Youth Venture staff.

### **A Competent Staff**

Fort Wayne Bible College is privileged by God to have on the most competent Christian Service Department in the Bible College movement. Miss Joy Gerig, Director, and Mr. Dick Baxter, Assistant Director, head up a department regularly being called upon for consultation by other Bible colleges. They coordinate the work of a staff, student assistants, and faculty members to provide field experience that are coupled with regular evaluation. Not only does a student have an opportunity to minister, but he/she is encouraged to receive input from others as well as to engage in regular self-evaluation to develop skills and abilities in serving.

With a combined 40 years of experience in directing Christian Service at the college, the directors are viewed as specialists by their peers. In 1981 they gave leadership to the formation of the Association of Christian Service Personnel (ACSP) which is a professional organization for Christian Service personnel and has a membership of 63 people representing 49 colleges. They have been called upon the American Association of Bible Colleges to serve as program leaders and workshop speakers at AABC conferences, and as an evaluation team member for colleges scheduled for accreditation

At the 1983 AABC Conference, they had the privilege to present a paper entitled "Guidelines For Developing Quality Christian Service Programs" during a joint session of presidents, academic deans, and Christian service personnel. This was the first time a special interest group had been permitted to address such a joint session.

As members of the faculty they provide resources in consultation on curriculum design and in helping faculty advisers plan practical programs that will be most beneficial in equipping our graduates to go out as committed, concerned, competent servant-leaders of Jesus Christ to minister through His Church to the contemporary world."

**An Academic Experience**

At Fort Wayne Bible College, Christian service is an academic experience. A comment from the revised college mission statement relates to how the Christian service experience is integrated with the curricular structure. "All students participate in Christian service field projects throughout their academic preparation; therefore they are given opportunities to apply the various segments of their training in actual ministry situations." Thus Christian service is viewed as part of the foundation preparation needed for preparing our graduates to be skillful in relating God's message of love to the variety of people they will teach and train upon completing their formal education.

**Summary**

The Christian Service department sought to link students practically with their chosen goal. This was done effectively through the effort of the C.S. staff. Under Joy Gerig's direction the department accomplished that goal, furthering the ministry of the college to the community, nationally and world-wide.

Compiled by Jay Platte